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ABSTRACT

This document is a participant booklet used in a sexual assault prevention program focusing on information for male teenagers. These topics are covered in the activities: (1) sex role expectations; (2) assertiveness skills; (3) responding to disrespectful language; (4) sexual harassment; (5) differences between sexual behavior and sexual exploitation; (6) defining sexual assault; (7) evaluating and setting personal limits; (8) the shared responsibility of saying and hearing "no"; (9) when is it too late to say "no"; (10) hazing of younger teenagers by older teenagers; (11) sexual abuse of young males; (12) paying attention to instincts; (13) telling or not telling about problems; (14) accessing support services; and (15) supporting a friend who has disclosed victimization. (ABL)

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So What's it to Me?

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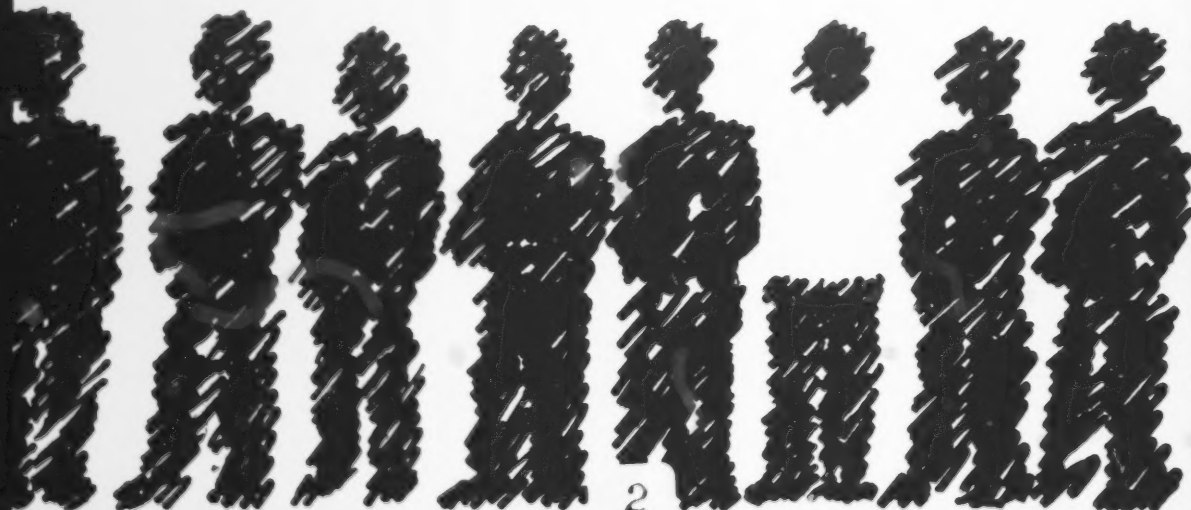
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Sexual Assault Information for Guys



So What's it to Me?

So What's It To Me?
Sexual Assault Information For Guys
by Gayle M. Stringer and Deanna Rants-Rodriguez
Design by Moe Design Associates
Illustrations by Viki Woodworth and
Steve Moe

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I'D NEVER RAPE SOMEBODY SO
WHY SHOULD I LEARN ABOUT IT?

I DON'T THINK I'VE EVER KNOWN
ANYONE WHO'S BEEN SEXUALLY ASSAULTED

ONLY SOMEONE WHO WAS ACTING
LIKE A JERK WOULD RAPE SOMEBODY...
SO WHY SHOULD I HAVE TO LEARN
ABOUT IT?

I'M A GUY... ISN'T IT
ONLY GIRLS THAT GET RAPED?

WHAT DOES RAPE HAVE TO
DO WITH DATING - I MEAN,
HOW COULD A DATE
TURN INTO A RAPE?

So What's It To Me?

These are tough questions with even tougher answers. The fact that you're willing to read about them and learn some ways to work on the problems shows that you're a guy who cares. Sexual assault hurts everybody....the victims as well as the friends, boyfriends, families and anyone who cares. Believe it or not, it's pretty likely that you already know someone who's had it happen to them-probably a girl, but maybe a guy. It happens to guys, too. Here's your chance to learn tips for your own safety as well as to think about ways of being the kind of person people would feel safe with and comfortable dating. It's also a chance to learn how to help someone who's had it happen to them - and to help yourself if you've had a bad experience.

E V E R Y B O D Y K N O W S



or so long men couldn't be caring, sympathetic or emotional. So many teens, both boys and girls, get the message that to be a man is to be tough, athletic, powerful or forceful...those are things everybody just knows, somehow. It also seems everybody knows that in order to get a girl you have to be all of these things and more!

What do you think? Do you feel you have to be all of those things to be acceptable? Can you remember being told by adults that you should not cry? Were you told ways you should act to be "grown up" or a "man"?

It's tough being a guy in today's world. After all, being all of those things is too much to expect. Besides, what about being those other ways you feel, such as thoughtful or considerate? What about being confused or scared? What about being gentle and sensitive? How are you to know what you're supposed to be? Or what's expected of you? Or what you want to be? Think for a moment about where these messages are coming from. Messages from the world around us may have a lot to do with how people express their sexuality. These messages can be very confusing.

Teens get the message from the movies that it's the tough guy who always gets what he wants by being pushy. The teen-age shopper gets the message created by manufacturers that the purpose of any item of clothing is to be extra sexy. There seems to be a message in some of our music that sex and violence go together. Somehow guys get the message from the world that they should always be in control, that they're invincible and that they'll always be safe if they're a "man". What is a guy to believe?



Do I think about sex? Yeah -all the time...



I don't think about sex too much- Is that normal?

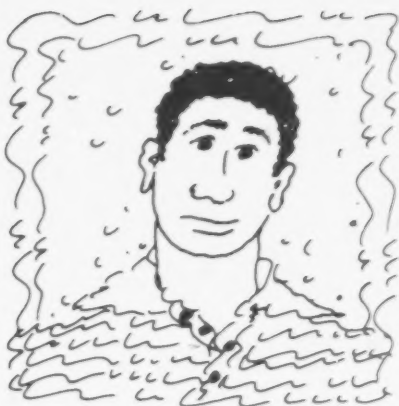
Actually, everyone feels turned on sometimes. Some people think about it more than others and that's okay. Sexy thoughts, touching, kissing, pleasant fantasies about sex create some great feelings.

Discovering that you have these sexual feelings can be both exciting and a bit unsettling.

The good news is that you can explore your sexuality within your values and in a caring, responsible way. Learning about yourself as a sexual being is an important part of becoming a whole person.

The bad news is that acting on these feelings in a thoughtless way can cause hurt. Sexual feelings can be confusing. There can be pressure from peers or adults. For guys, it's sometimes the pressure to "get laid". These pressures can result in taking advantage of other people.

For a guy, fitting in with the crowd sometimes means he feels pressure to put on an act about how experienced he is. He has to be a mover. If he can't tell others about his experiences, he'll look like a nobody. And no guy wants to look like he has hang ups about sex.



*I don't know what to do about
the feelings I'm having.*



In truth, and this is part of the good news, exploring your sexuality does not mean you have to experience everything right now. It means that you, and those with whom you have relationships can make these decisions in your own time and way.

This booklet contains very direct thoughts from teens about relationships, sexual exploration and the problem of sexual assault. The teens who contributed their ideas to this booklet were very open about their needs, desires, expectations, hopes and fears. They wanted to share them with you so that you and your friends might be able to be more open and better able to communicate with each other.

The purpose of this booklet is to give you information and to challenge you to examine your own beliefs. It may be different from any booklet you have ever read. There will be some things to read, to think about and to do. It is designed to give you an opportunity to explore your own ideas and values about relationships, sexual and otherwise. It will give you a way of examining your expectations and actions.

What We're Taught....

When a guy reaches his teen years all sorts of touching may change for him. As a young child a boy could sit on his Mom or Dad's lap, get hugs, give hugs and get the special comforting feelings that come from touching. Without telling him, adults may stop hugging him in the same way. No one may tell him but he can watch it all around him. Touching, for a grown up man, means something different than it used to when he

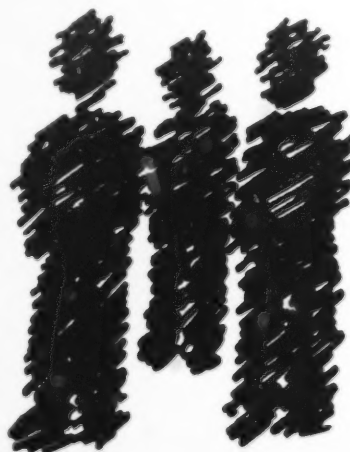
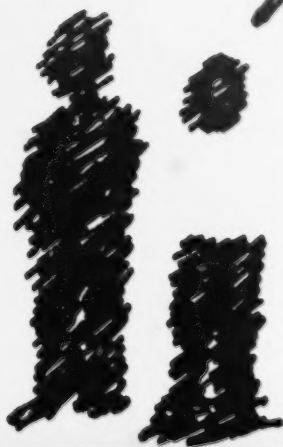
was a boy. Now there seems to be something sexual about that comforting kind of touching. What does that mean for a young man? What kind of touching might now be misunderstood? Where can he get good comforting touches? And if a young woman hugs him, what does it mean? These changes in the way touching is given and received can be confusing.



It seems that one of the big problems is that guys and girls are taught that they should act in ways which are considered "male" and "female". Many guys learn that they are supposed to be in charge all of the time; that they should take control and make the decisions. Some believe they need to be sexually experienced in order to be considered a "man". Many girls believe that they should be quiet, submissive, and willing to let the guy make the decisions....or else they aren't "feminine".

All of these beliefs about how people should behave complicate the way young men and women act toward each other. Behaving in these "masculine" and "feminine" ways causes the relationship to be unequal. Many teens feel that if they behave differently than these expectations they run the risk of being ridiculed and maybe not being accepted by their friends.

WHAT ABOUT YOU?



How Can A Guy Start Making A Difference?

How can a guy start making difference? How can he treat others equally, respecting them, yet not get laughed at by his friends... especially if his friends are the ones doing things that are hurting others?

How do you change your own actions when you realize they are contributing to someone else's inconsiderate or harassing behavior?

John was trying to use a certain amount of personal power and control over the girls at the locker. We can guess that the girl was surprised and a little uneasy about being trapped against the locker.



JOHN AND JASON ARE WALKING DOWN THE HALL AFTER SCHOOL. THEY ARE TOSSING A MATH BOOK BACK AND FORTH AND LOOKING FOR SOMETHING INTERESTING TO HAPPEN. AS THEY PASS BY THE LOCKER AREA THEY SEE TWO GIRLS PUTTING AWAY THEIR BOOKS. THE GIRLS ARE TALKING WITH EACH OTHER AND DO NOT SEE THE GUYS COMING UP TO THE LOCKER. AS JOHN AND JASON WALK OVER TO THE LOCKER JOHN SAYS, "WATCH THIS AND LEARN."

JOHN APPROACHED THE LOCKERS AND PLACES HIS ARMS ON EACH SIDE OF ONE OF THE YOUNG WOMEN, TRAPPING HER AGAINST THE LOCKER. "HI THERE,.....".

AS THEY APPROACHED THE LOCKER AREA AND JOHN TOLD HIM TO "WATCH AND LEARN", JASON MIGHT HAVE CALLED OUT TO THE YOUNG WOMEN, "HEY, HOW YA DOIN'?" OR ANYTHING WHICH MIGHT HAVE PREPARED THE GIRLS THAT HE AND JOHN WERE INTENDING TO COME TALK TO THEM. JOHN WOULD NOT HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO SUPRISE THEM WITH UNCOMFORTABLE OR UNPLEASANT BEHAVIOR.



AS JOHN TRAPPED THE GIRL AGAINST THE LOCKER JASON MIGHT HAVE TOSSED THE BOOK TO JOHN CHALLENGING HIM TO CATCH IT, THEREBY GIVING THE YOUNG WOMAN AN OPPORTUNITY NOT TO BE TRAPPED. IN EITHER CASE, JASON IS NOT THREATENING JOHN OR MAKING HIM LOOK BAD IN FRONT OF THE GIRLS.

What could Jason have done to help the young women out and still not make his friend feel like a fool?

OR HE COULD HAVE

AND SHE COULD HAVE



THE YOUNG WOMAN, SEEING JOHN'S INTENTION, PLACED HER HAND FIRMLY ON HIS SHOULDER AND SAID "YOU'RE MAKING ME UNCOMFORTABLE. PLEASE TAKE YOUR ARMS DOWN." THE YOUNG WOMEN HAVE, AS YOU SEE, SOME OPTIONS AS WELL. THIS ONE USED ASSERTIVENESS. IF JOHN HAD BEEN STOPPED EARLIER, IT MIGHT HAVE SAVED HIM SOME EMBARRASSMENT. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT JOHN WANTED TO SHOW JASON THAT HIS REPUTATION AS AN EXPERIENCED MAN WAS BASED ON HARD FACT. SOMETIMES A DESIRE TO BE KNOWN AS "EXPERIENCED" CAN CAUSE PROBLEMS

Other Ways to Say it

It's Saturday morning. All the guys are hanging out in the weight room and comparing Friday night dates.

"Who was the fox you were with?"

"Did you score?"

"What's wrong with you, Smith? Doesn't sex turn you on?"

"Was she any good?"

It's pretty easy to feel like you have to be as successful as the other guys are claiming to be. If you listen carefully to what these guys are saying, you'll see that they aren't very concerned about young women as people - ----only as performers in their story swapping. It's difficult to be one of the guys and still show that you don't treat women as they do, or at least like they say they do. It isn't necessary to put other guys down, but it is possible to respond positively without looking bad to your friends.

Who was that fox?

Janice is the girl I was with.

Did you score?

Hey, I wasn't playing a game!

Was she any good?

We always have a great time...or...She's a lot of fun to be with.

What's the matter, doesn't sex turn you on?

Sure it turns me on but my private life is my own business and it's not something I want to talk about with everybody.

Relationships with friends, with other young men and young women, which are based on respect for one another can be great. Friendships based on competition and a need to prove something can be difficult.

THE **FLIP** SIDE

It can work the other way, too. Scott seemed to be the most popular guy around. Everyone wanted to be with him. Jennifer kept calling him up to talk all the time. He didn't really want to talk with her, but he didn't want to be rude either. And it was kind of fun to think that she liked him even if he wasn't interested in her...at least not in the same way that she was interested in him. Scott noticed that she also ate lunch at the same place he and his friends met every day. It seemed as though she always managed to say something to him that made his friends think that there was something going on between them.

THIS BOTHERS SCOTT -
WHAT CAN HE SAY?

DOES HE WANT TO
DO ANYTHING YET?

One day Jennifer met him after her last class. She told him that her car had broken down and asked if he would mind dropping her off at the hamburger place where she worked. She was afraid she'd be fired if she was late.

Scott drove her to work, but before he dropped her off, she really started coming on to him.

A lot of his friends were at the restaurant for a hamburger after school. They hollered at Scott and gave him a bad time, but he just wanted to get out of the situation. He wanted to get away from Jennifer.

HOW CAN SCOTT SAY
WHAT HE WANTS
THE RELATIONSHIP
TO BE ?

HOW WAS HE
FEELING ?

The next day Scott's friends really started teasing him, saying they knew all along that he and Jennifer had a thing going. They told him she had bragged about how "good" he was. Scott was furious and embarrassed. Jennifer had made it look like they had a sexual relationship and they barely had any relationship at all!

Can you see when Scott first felt funny?

Were there signals early in their relationship that might have given him warning about what eventually happened?

Looking at the problem of sexual harassment and sexual assault from this side might help you to see the problem as a young woman might see it. It's flattering to have someone pay attention to you, but it stops being fun when it becomes a hassle.

IS IT ALL RIGHT?

If a male holds a female down and forces her to engage in intercourse if:

	Agree	Disagree
• He spent a lot of money on her	☐	☐
• He is so turned on he thinks he can't stop	☐	☐
• She has had sexual intercourse with other guys	☐	☐
• She is stoned or drunk	☐	☐
• She says she will have sex with him but changes her mind	☐	☐
• She lets him touch her above the waist	☐	☐
• They have dated a long time	☐	☐
• She has had sex with him before	☐	☐
• She led him on	☐	☐
• She is wearing suggestive clothing	☐	☐
• She is hitchhiking	☐	☐
• She is out by herself late at night	☐	☐
• She is living with him but they are currently separated.	☐	☐

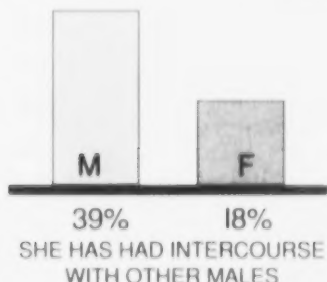
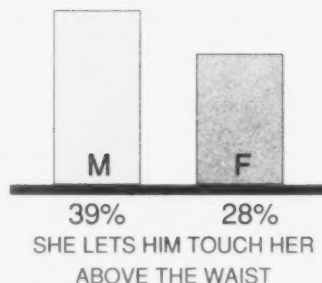
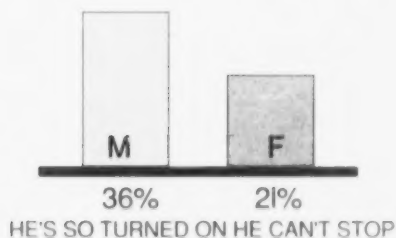
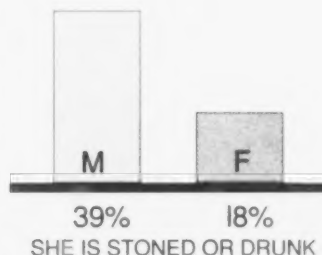
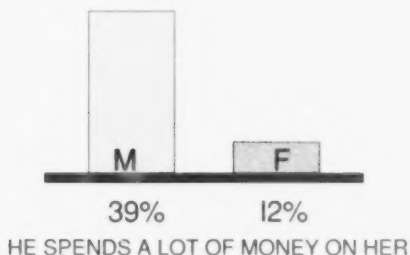
All of these situations describe rape because

✓ there was no consent

✓ force was used

(Taken from "Top Secret" by Billie Jo Flerchinger and Jennifer Fay,
Copyright 1982, King County Rape Relief)

In recent years several people have asked high school students under what conditions it would be okay to hold a girl down and force her to have sexual intercourse. It is pretty eye opening to realize that teens like you and your friends answered this question with a YES under the following conditions:



Even though people know that forced sexual intercourse is rape they often don't identify it in a dating situation.

(Based on a study conducted at U.C.L.A. by R. Giarruso, J. Goodchilds, P. Johnson and G. Zellman.)



Sexual assault isn't all that hard to define. Generally it means any unwanted, forced sexual contact. This can take many different forms. It can be

- ✓ harassment
- ✓ exposing--flashing
- ✓ forcing a person to pose for sexual pictures or making a person look at pornography
- ✓ fondling--unwanted sexual touching
- ✓ rape (actual penetration of the vagina, anus or mouth with the penis OR penetration of the vagina or anus with an object.

The legal definitions are more complicated but there are two important elements. They are:

- 1) unwanted sexual contact
- 2) coercion (meaning some kind of force)

It can happen between friends, dates, strangers, with people you know a little or a lot, people that you trust, relatives, other guys...anyone.

It can happen at home, at a friend's house, at school, at the gym, in a car....anywhere.

And it can happen to girls, guys, men, women, old or young.... anyone....even to you or to those you care about.

What Do We Know About Sexual Assault?

We know that people don't ask to be raped.

Rape is a hurtful and humiliating crime, the effects of which can be long lasting. No one willingly asks to be hurt.

We know that people who hitchhike are not asking to be raped.

Hitchhiking is risky, but in taking risks none of us asks to be assaulted, kidnapped or raped. None of us asks to be a victim of violent crime.

We know that victims may not always be able to prevent rape.

Each situation is unique. All of us react to fear differently. Even if a victim tries to protect himself, circumstances may make escape impossible.

We know that both young men and young women are sexually assaulted.

National statistics indicate that at least one in four girls and one in seven boys will be sexually assaulted.

We know that a young man's sexual preference is not determined by his sexual victimization.

Young men are most often assaulted by men who are heterosexual in their adult relationships. It is not normal to be aroused by a person so much younger than they are. This has nothing to do with the victim. It has only to do with the offender.

We know that victims are not responsible for being raped.

Rape is a crime carried out by the offender. It is often planned. Sometimes it happens because the offender does not respect the limits set by the victim - sexual activity continues after the offender is told to stop. Victims are not responsible for the assault.

What's Missing?

This is Confusing!



Communication, That's What!

The expectations, hopes and beliefs you and your date bring to the dating situation have a lot to do with how smoothly it goes for the two of you.

Jamal and Latisha had been dating for several weeks. It seemed like things had been going pretty well. They enjoyed being together. Both of them had privately thought that they wanted to get a little more serious.

Latisha thought, "I just want to have fun, no hassles, but I want him to know I like him...a lot."

Jamal was thinking, "I want to have fun and I think I want to do more sexual things with her, but

I'm really not ready to make love with her."

Even though it made him pretty nervous, Jamal decided to take a chance and talk about it. He told Latisha that he really liked her a lot and that it seemed awfully important to him to talk about what he was hoping their relationship could become. He was surprised when Latisha seemed almost relieved to be able to tell him what she was hoping, too.

You'll find that E.S.P. doesn't work in relationships. If you are expecting certain things or if you have certain limits it is very important to talk about them.

SO--

1. Know your limits.
2. Set and discuss your limits beforehand.
3. Listen to your intuition.
4. Listen to and respect your partners limits.
5. Be assertive, act immediately if your limits are reached.

Why is it that some people hear the word **NO** and think that it means something else?

Where do these other meanings come from? How do we know what he or she really means by **NO**.

Communication means listening as well as telling. It means hearing what the other person says as well as saying what you mean.

WHAT DOES NO MEAN?



WHAT ARE THE RISKS

The risk in believing that
No means No is that:

- ✓ you might not get what
you want

The risks of **not** believing that
No means No are that:

- ✓ someone will get hurt either
emotionally or physically
- ✓ a sexual assault, from
unwanted sexual touching
to rape, could happen
- ✓ it may mean the end of a
relationship that you really
wanted to keep

When Is It Too Late To Say No? (Is it ever?)

Mary and Stan were having a great time. They had gone to the ball game and the dance afterward. It had been such a good band that everyone felt really "up" after the dance.

Two couples decided to go to the local pizza place for something to eat. They were all starved!

Mary and Stan went along. Stan bought dinner. Mary was a little worried. It was beginning to be an expensive date. She didn't know if she should offer to pay for some things or if he'd be insulted. They got into the ball game with their school activity cards, but he had paid for the dance and food they had eaten earlier in the evening.

Stan was getting a little worried too. He hadn't planned to go for pizza after the dance, but all his friends were going.

As they left dinner they drove, just the two of them, toward Mary's home. Stan pulled off the road into a nearby park and stopped the car. It made Mary a little nervous, but they were having so much fun that it didn't seem to matter.

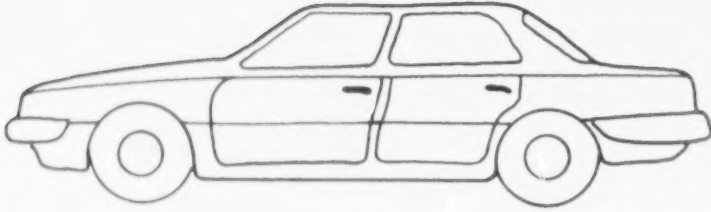
Stan and Mary began to neck.

It felt good and they talked and joked around and kissed for quite a while. Stan began to touch Mary's breasts and her thighs. She began to rub Stan's legs and thighs. Their touching and exploring of each other became more and more exciting.

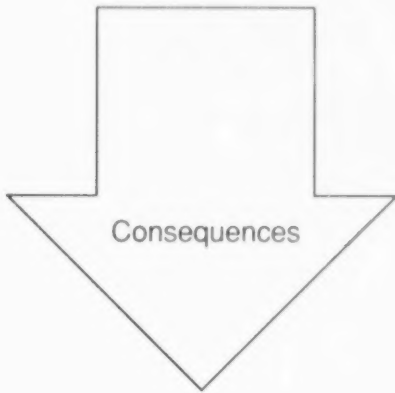
Suddenly, Mary felt scared. She had a lot of mixed up thoughts running around in her head. She liked all of the feelings but she didn't want to go any farther. So she told him, "No Stan. We have to stop now." Then she began to worry...How was Stan feeling? What did she owe him after the fun evening he had shown her and all the money he had spent? Would he hate her forever, now? Would he be "physically damaged" if she wouldn't let him go all the way? She didn't believe that old myth but it worried her all the same.



What If?

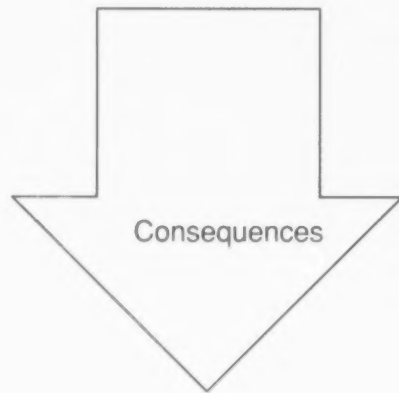


He said Okay and stopped



They were both frustrated
but talked it over and
worked it out

He kept going



He raped her

No matter what the relationship
or the situation it is **NEVER** too late
to say no and it's never too late to hear no!

Something to Consider

What if it happens to you?

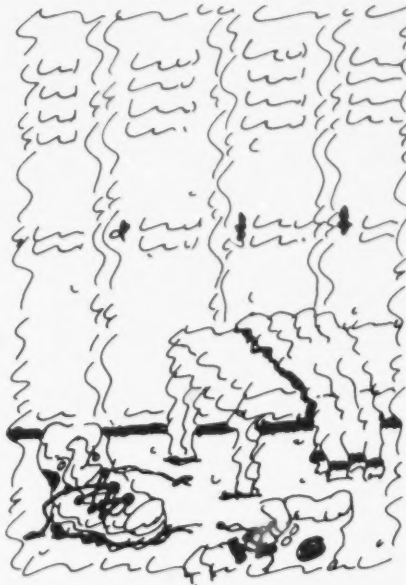
It might seem impossible but stories like this one are not unusual:

Juan and Jerry were new at the high school. Not only were they new, but they were freshmen.

There was so much for them to learn about all at once. Gym class was no exception.

Each day after class their gym teacher would have them run laps and when they finished they headed for the showers. The first day after class two seniors ran through the locker room as Juan and Jerry were showering and swiped their clothes. They took them out in the hall and left Juan and Jerry dripping in their towels. The guys were good sports about it, got their shorts on and retrieved their clothes. It made them really mad, though.

The next day the same seniors ran through the shower room at the same time. It was becoming clear to Juan and Jerry that they had been selected to be these guys' personal fun. The older guys wrestled Juan and Jerry to the floor and made them beg to be let up before they ran off. Others of the freshman gym class saw



what was going on but they tried to ignore it. They probably figured that if they interfered it might happen to them.

Jerry and Juan were beginning to feel a bit scared. They knew that they were sitting ducks after gym class and they didn't like it.

The next time it happened the same guys ran through and this time they wrestled Juan and Jerry to the ground and began touching their private parts. After they ran off Jerry and Juan talked about what was happening.

Jerry was getting tired of the hassle. He thought that they should tell someone what was happening. Juan said not to make a big deal out of it because it would just cause more trouble. Besides, it's embarrassing to tell...how are you going to say to your gym teacher or the principal that a couple of seniors are running into the locker room and grabbing your balls? They were freshmen and they were new at this school. If they told on these guys they might never belong here.

What was happening to Juan and Jerry was assault. At first it was a small hassle. Something that freshmen might not think too strange from older students. It turned into a kind of sexual assault. The kind of touching that was happening was not appropriate at all. If it doesn't stop now it's hard to tell where it might end. These guys don't have an easy decision to make.

What Do You Think?

How do you think Juan and Jerry are feeling?

How would you feel if this were to happen to you?

What do you think they could do?

...confront the older guys?

...tell an adult?

...tell some other friends?

What would you say to Juan and Jerry if they were your friends and they told you what was going on?

Dave also had an experience with sexual assault. It was quite different from Juan and Jerry's experience, but it was sexual assault all the same.

Dave was not active in school activities, sports or after school clubs. He had lots of interests at home which were more important to him. One of those hobbies was photography. He enjoyed taking pictures and he really liked working in the darkroom developing and enlarging his work.

A longtime family friend was also a photographer. He offered to let Dave use his enlarger which was much better than Dave's.

After several weeks of work with Dave's negatives, the man brought out some shots that he had taken to show Dave how to take better pictures. All of them were pictures of nude guys about Dave's age. The man told Dave that it was best to photograph people without their clothing in order to "study" the human body.

Dave felt embarrassed and, to tell the truth, a little shocked when he looked at the pictures. He began to laugh at the way the people in the pictures looked.



The man said that he understood Dave's embarrassment but he also told Dave that this would help him become more mature. "All young men need someone to teach them," he would say. Then he showed Dave some other pictures which included shots of a couple of guys Dave knew.

Seeing these pictures, said the man, might make Dave feel a little less awkward about posing himself. After all, these other guys had done it and Dave really should, too.

Dave felt funny about taking his clothes off and posing for pictures, but he knew the man very well and he trusted him. This man was a good friend of his Dad's and Dave had known him all his life. He felt sure that this man wouldn't ask him to do anything that he shouldn't and besides, if his friends had done it, why not?

After a while he began to think that some of the things the man was doing had nothing to do with better photography.....He wanted to tell his Mom or Dad, but he didn't know what to say.



Questions to Ask Yourself?

How might Dave have felt trapped in the situation with his photographer friend?

Were there times when Dave might have had an opportunity to get out of the situation?

What might he have done?

What did the man say to try to convince Dave that this was a reasonable thing to do?

I

t's important to remember that you have all of the facts when thinking about the situation. Dave had only a little information at a time. All of the pieces fit together like clues in a puzzle now, but when Dave was going through it all the facts were incomplete. That's how it is for most young men when an incident like this occurs. Thinking about it now may help you to better recognize when someone you trust, who has always been reasonable with you, asks you to do something unreasonable.

We Know These Things

Yes, it does happen to guys... and it can be frightening, degrading, hurtful, forced and it is certainly a crime, just as it is for young women.

We know these things about the sexual assault of young men.

1. Many more young men are molested than report. We know this because those who do tell often tell about other boys molested by the same person who abused them. Some researchers say that many boys who tell are able to tell of 10 more who have been sexually assaulted.

2. Very young boys are more at risk of sexual assault by family members or caretakers.

3. Young teen-age boys are most at risk of being sexually assaulted by friendly authority figures such as a teacher, coach or youth leader.

4. Older teen-age boys are most at risk of being sexually assaulted by peers and adults.

Keeping Safe

What can you do to help keep yourself safe?

Well, there aren't any guarantees, but there are some precautions and actions which may help a lot.

Believe that sexual assault could happen to you.

It can happen to guys.....and no one is invincible.

Be aware--and alert in any situation.

Relationships can be abused. Being aware that an assault is a possibility is the first step to being safer.

Pay attention to your instincts.

If something feels like it's wrong or scary trust that feeling. You're probably right.

Take notice of changes in relationships.

If someone stops respecting your wishes or limits they may be the kind of person who would take advantage of you.

Remember: It isn't your fault if you are unable to avoid a sexual assault. Realize that even doing your best may not get you out of the situation. Whatever you do is, at that time, the best that you could do. You're not less of a man if it happens to you. It isn't your fault.

To Tell or Not To Tell

That's the Big Question!

The next move is up to you. If you were assaulted would you tell? How would you handle it if you didn't tell?

Try this:

In the following spaces list what you think might happen To You....if....

How might your friends treat you if you told them you had been sexually assaulted?

How might your friends treat you if you had been sexually assaulted and you didn't tell them?

How would you feel if you told someone.....?

Or - If you kept it to yourself and didn't tell anyone?

How would your parents react if you told them you had been sexually assaulted?

.....if you didn't tell them?

Who Might You Tell?

Before you make a decision about whom to tell, you might try this test. 1) How do you think they will react? 2) How do they usually react to big problems?



Sometimes conditions of the assault affect a person's willingness to tell. For example:

What if others at your school would find out?

What if there had been alcohol or drugs where you were assaulted? What if it involved other guys?

What if you were doing something or were in a place you've been told not to be? (hitchhiking, for example) If so, keep this in mind. **Sexual assault is not a fair punishment for breaking a rule.** The sexual assault was not your fault.

And finally-

Sometimes it's easier to tell someone you don't know. Your community may have resources for you. Look for your local rape crisis center, crisis clinic hot line or other community agency.

Who's in your community? _____

Helping a Friend

If someone shares that they've been victimized you are already a trusted person. To show you are supportive:

LISTEN

What you say isn't as important as your willingness to listen. It's so hard to say just the right thing but your friend most likely needs someone who can be strong enough to hear the words that describe their feelings.

BELIEVE

One of the most hurtful things that can happen is when someone says, "No, that couldn't have happened". Many people can't cope, so they just say it couldn't happen. That's extremely hard for a victim to hear.

SHOW THAT YOU CARE

Just be there. Don't reject your friend. Sometimes people feel deserted if their friends back off too far.

HELP ERASE FEELINGS OF GUILT

Be sure your friend understands that you know that the offender is to blame. No matter what your friend could or couldn't do to get out of the situation, it's not their fault.

SUPPORT THEIR RIGHT TO BE IN CONTROL

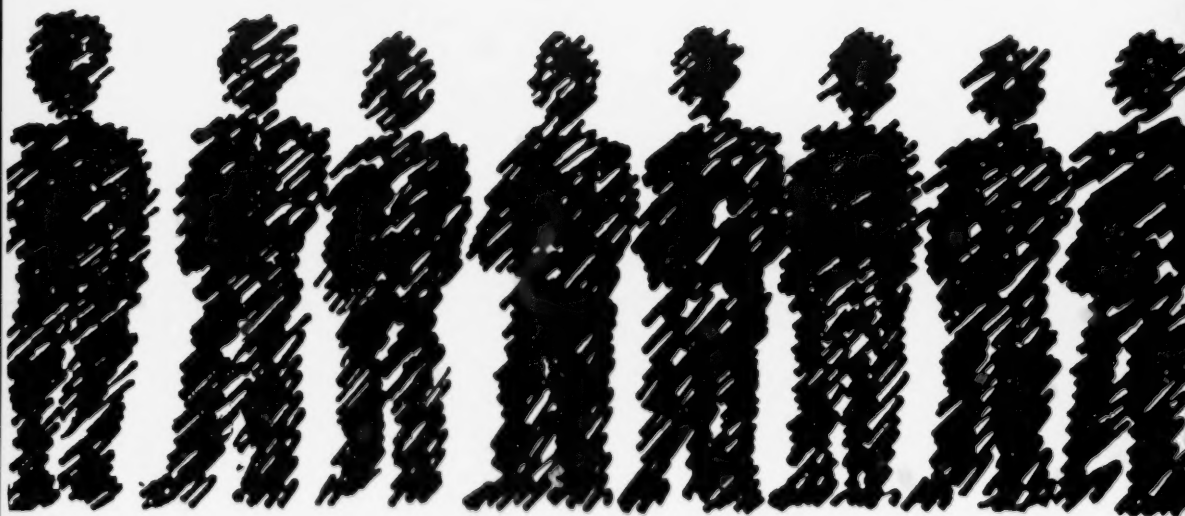
Lots of tough decisions need to be made....like whom to tell, when to tell, what to do. Let your friend be in control of those decisions.

AND ONE MORE THOUGHT...

Some sexual assaults involve family members and can go on over a period of years. Often times the person who is being victimized is confused about what to do. They want the abuse to stop, but they don't want to hurt the family member. As a helping person you may recognize that someone, with more power than your friend, needs to be involved in order to stop the abuse. Getting someone else involved may seem painful when you first consider it, but letting an abusive situation continue to get worse can be more painful.

Take Care of Yourself

If you begin to feel like you're carrying the weight of the world on your shoulders, ask for help. Call a counselor or your local rape crisis center hot line. They can listen to you, support you and answer questions you might have. It's important that you care for yourself so you can care about your friend. Remember, you can best help by listening, believing and being supportive. It isn't your job to make everything all right.



So What's It to You?

Sexual assault, as you can see, is something that guys have to be concerned about.

Communicating clearly, creating equal relationships and paying attention to the actions of others are much easier to read about than they are to accomplish. But you can accomplish these things by learning and practicing ways of saying things that feel hard to say and by listening with care to others. It may seem difficult or awkward at first but with practice you will become more skilled.

By thinking ahead about the problems of sexual assault you can create for yourself

- ✓ Good communication
- ✓ Great relationships
- ✓ A safer, healthier life as a teen

And if you or a friend should need help, you know where to turn.



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